

June 17, 1978

#78-43

TO: Construction Code Commissioners

FROM: Richard C. Smith

RE: BOCA INTERPRETATION: RESTAURANT AISLE WIDTH

Appeal from a decision by the Construction Board of Appeals, City of Novi; Petitioner: Melco, Inc. Appeal Docket CCC-78-01.

Hearing held by the Construction Code Commission on April 19, 1978.

Issue of Appeal: Whether the BOCA Basic Building Code requires a restaurant with fixed seating to maintain aisles of at least 36 inches of width. This was applied by the City of Novi to Melco, Inc., as a requirement for the proper aisle width.

The Construction Code Commission at the hearing remanded back to the City of Novi Construction Board of Appeals for their consideration petitioner's proposed alternative on seating arrangement.

The Commission questioned whether it is a mandatory requirement to have 36 inch aisleways and requested an official interpretation of aisleway requirements in restaurants from BOCA International, such interpretation to be submitted to the City of Novi Construction Board of Appeals for their assistance in making a determination of the issue when received.

The formal interpretation has been received and states:

"Section 418.0 Public Assembly other than theaters does cover restaurant seating. The width of exitway access aisles in restaurants as formed by fixed or non-fixed tables and chairs, or both, may not be less than 36 inches in width. Section 418.0 is intended to apply to all places of public assembly other than theaters, the listing in that section is not intended to be all inclusive, such that an example of a similar occupancy in Section 418.1 would be a restaurant. Thus, the primary exitway access aisles which serve groups of tables and chairs (either fixed or unfixed) may not be less than 36 inches in width."

Based on the above formal interpretation as requested, it is recommended that the Construction Code Commission transmit a copy of this formal interpretation to the City of Novi, Construction Board of Appeals and to the petitioner, Melco, Inc., with the statement that this 36 inch requirement of exitway access aisles width be applied to the appeal as presented to the Commission by the petitioner, and that compliance with this requirement be met; upholding the City of Novi Construction Board of Appeals decision.

Copies of this formal interpretation are attached.

**Basic Code
Interpretation
Service**

BOCA INTERNATIONAL
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* NOTE: THIS SUPERSEDES REVISED INTERP DATED 6/15/78
2nd Revision
Code Interpretation No. 084/418/78
Code Section(s) 418.0
Date of Staff Preparation 6/20/78
(ABOVE FOR BOCA USE ONLY)

Inquirer David Harrier Title Assistant Chief
Jurisdiction/organization State of Michigan, Construction Code Commission
Address Secondary Complex, 7150 Harris Drive City Lansing State MI Zip 48909
☒ Building Code/1978 ☐ Fire Prevention Code ☐ Housing/Property Maintenance Code ☐ Mechanical Code ☐ Plumbing Code

Question: Does Section 418.0 Public Assembly
other than theaters cover the
situation of restaurant seating?
Can the width of exitway access
aisles in restaurants as formed by
fixed or non-fixed tables and chairs
be less than 36 inches wide?

Answer: Yes to the first question;
No to the second.

Comment: Section 418.0 of the 1978 Basic Building Code
is intended to apply to all places of public
assembly other than theaters. The listing of
specific occupancies in Section 418.1 is not
intended to be all inclusive. Restaurants would
be one example of a "similar occupancy" referred
to in Section 418.1.

FORMAL INTERPRETATION
As approved by the
Interpretations Committee
6/22/78

The primary exitway access aisles which serve
groups of tables and chairs (either fixed or
unfixed) must be not less than 36 inches in
width.

*Revised from initial issue as a result
of Interpretations Committee Meeting,
June 8, 1978 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Prepared by Kenneth M. Schoonover
Kenneth M. Schoonover, P.E., Sr. Staff Engr.

Reviewed by: Paul K. Hellstedt, P.E., Technical Director

To be completed by Interpretations Committee member and returned to BOCA offices.
Comments to be indicated on reverse side of sheet.

☐ APPROVE ☐ HOLD

cc: John Hanna (same address)

Nature of Committee Member

Date